

Includes the Bradlaugh, Foote, and "Freethinker" Trials, with  
Mr. VARLEY'S letter to the Electors of Northampton.

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Mr. BRADLAUGH Proved Utterly  
Unfit to Represent any English Constituency

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AN APPEAL  
TO THE  
MEN OF ENGLAND

By HENRY VARLEY.

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*Mr. Bradlaugh asks the sympathy of his fellow countrymen concerning his rejection by the House of Commons. I remind him that he merits their sternest reprobation and opposition. He thinks to trade upon their lack of knowledge. He shall not do it. I challenged him three years since to refute in a Court of Law the statements made in "the Appeal." He dare not attempt it. His recent threat of an action against me, was simply intended to throw dust in the eyes of those who heard it. It is monstrous that the daily press should lend itself to circulate his idle bombast.*

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MAY, 1884.

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LONDON:  
OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH,  
73, LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

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## P R E F A C E .



It is gratifying to know to how large an extent the Appeal to the Men of England has check-mated Mr. Bradlaugh. I rejoice in this because the contest is one in which issues of very grave character are involved. This question is not one of party politics, much less is it a question of "the infringement of the rights of a constituency." No one knows better than Mr. Bradlaugh does that the opposition which exists against him arises from his own lawless conduct. For many years, on hundreds of platforms in England, he has uttered the most revolting, atheistic, and social blasphemies. Through the medium of the press he has circulated these shocking statements by hundreds of thousands. This has been done to further his atheistic principles when, under the self-assumed title of "Iconoclast," he went through the Country using the vile language, samples of which are furnished in "This Appeal." Beyond this, he has circulated books which are loathsome and abominable. These disgusting publications teach doctrines and practices which are subversive of the Divine institutions of home, marriage, social purity, and national morality.

It must not be forgotten that, for publishing and circulating "The Fruits of Philosophy," Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and the abnormal Mrs. Besant were tried, found guilty, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

Mr. Bradlaugh never tires of appealing to the sympathies of his fellow countrymen on the ground of political liberty. In doing this, I charge him with political dishonesty. Few men know better than he does how to draw "a red herring" across the scent. Mr. Bradlaugh represents that the opposition he receives arises from the fact that he is a representative of working men. This is altogether untrue. Few men in the House of Commons are more respected than Messrs. Broadhurst and Burt, who are well-known representatives of the working classes. The social mischief wrought by his abominable publications in Northampton is simply deplorable. One of the leading Christian men and Liberal politicians in the town told me that during the past twelve years the growth of infidelity, lawlessness, sensual license, and blasphemy amongst working men and young people has been appalling, and that the outlook, socially, was simply deplorable.

Mr. Bradlaugh has recently threatened me with an action at law. I am not in the least alarmed. I sent his solicitor's letter to my lawyer, who replied that we should defend any action taken. I am free to admit that if my statements are not true, I had no right to publish them. Further, if any man in England should charge me with making or publishing such statements, and they were not true, I would certainly give him all which the law should allow. Mrs. Besant has attempted to reply to this Appeal. A more worthless, or scurrilous diatribe has seldom been issued. Unable to answer the definite charges made, she resorted to the old expedient of abusing the plaintiff.

With all the Editorial material in her hands she failed to answer the charges. Mrs. Besant's denial of the accuracy of quotation is entirely false, as the columns of the *National Reformer*, the Pamphlets, and the British Museum Library conclusively prove. The statement that I had left out contexts which, if quoted, would have entirely altered the sense of Mr. Bradlaugh's words, is absurd and untrue. What context could alter the blasphemous directness and evident meaning of the sentences which I have quoted?

HENRY VARLEY

# TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND.

FOR THEIR PRIVATE READING ONLY.

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GENTLEMEN,—There are times when silence becomes a crime, and though to me it is utterly repulsive to publish the following statements, I dare not withhold them from your knowledge. It is in the interests of right and truth, and on the behalf of home and women and children that I earnestly appeal to you. This is no personal quarrel or political party question, but a war in defence of right and truth. I sound a clarion blast against Charles Bradlaugh, by his own writings and speeches proved to be the notorious advocate of social iniquity and lawlessness. If any other man in England should dare to utter such revolting blasphemies, or publish and circulate such horrible books and doctrines, I promise him the same uncompromising opposition which I have given Mr. Bradlaugh.

Having selected Northampton, Mr. Bradlaugh proceeded, years since, to educate large numbers of working men into sympathy with his extreme political views, and his unclean and lawless social publications. He industriously kept at this work of personal propaganda for fifteen years, and gradually succeeded in demoralising a large part of the constituency. This is how the return of Mr. Bradlaugh came about. To affirm that the constituency deal with this question on political grounds, that they have nothing to do with Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions or doctrines, is to assert that politics have nothing to do with a man's morals, character, or conduct. Such a statement is altogether false.

The law already makes a number of exceptions, *e.g.*, it is not competent for the electors of Northampton to return an Irish peer, a clergyman, a bankrupt, an imbecile, a felon, or a woman. Such is the letter of the law. I hold that the spirit of the law together with the moral conviction of the nation, forbids the acceptance, if returned, of such a man as Mr. Bradlaugh.

The basis of English law is found in personal responsibility to God. No man in England has the right to deny that responsibility, though he may have the power to do so. The Legislature has no right to aid any man in denying that responsibility.



Herein is seen the lawless character of the Affirmation Bill. For the first time in the history of England the Government attempted to pass a measure which would have made it competent and legal for any man, if he chose, to deny his responsibility to God. A more corrupt and false view of liberty, or a more unjust use of the functions of the Legislature was never attempted.

He again asks the electors of Northampton to uphold him, and expects that the representatives of the English constituencies will ignore the law and permit him to enter the House of Commons unchallenged. God forbid! Let that House stand firm against the admission of this representative of social iniquity and atheism. How dare the electors of Northampton speak of their constitutional liberties being infringed? The question is, How they dare insult the English nation by returning a man to make laws in regard to national morality and righteousness, whose public teachings and writings have for years past been disgusting, lawless, and false, and who has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for publishing and circulating the same.

The nation expects the constituencies to send "fit and proper persons" to represent them. Such is the law! How has Northampton answered that requirement? She sends the author of the following blasphemous utterances.

In one of his public discussions Mr. Bradlaugh thus expresses himself in relation to the Supreme Lawgiver, the Almighty God:—"If you tell me that by God you mean 'something' which created the universe, which before the act of creation was not: 'something' which has the power of destroying that universe; 'something' which rules and governs it, and which is, nevertheless, entirely distinct and different in substance from the universe—then I am prepared to deny that any such existence can be." (Robertson Discussion, p. 12.) Again, he says:—"I hold that the logical consequence of Secularism is the denial, the absolute denial of a Providence." (Holyoake Discussion, p. 29.) In the same discussion, p. 16, he says:—"Although, at present, it may be perfectly true that all men who are Secularists are not yet Atheists, I put it to you, as also perfectly true, that, in my opinion, the logical consequence of the acceptance of Secularism must be that the man gets to Atheism, if he has brains enough to comprehend." In another place he observes:—"I urged that Atheism denied the existence of a God controlling the universe." (Newcastle Discussion, p. 74.) He blasphemously affirms that it is utterly impossible to establish Secularism until not only Christianity, but every form of Theism is completely destroyed. And this is Charles Bradlaugh, the blasphemer, that Northampton dares to send to the House of Commons! There is no mistaking his language, nor the object that he has in view. He exclaims:—"I find the preached ideas of God interfering with the children in their cradles, with the children in their schools, with the grown-up

children in their churches, and in their daily avocations of life, and I am obliged to destroy Theism to make way for Secularism." Christianity he calls "a system theoretically unjust and practically pernicious;" "rotten, intolerant, and false; derived from the cruelty, the bigotry, the barbarism of a bygone age." (Barker, as above, pp. 85-104.) In the same discussion, p. 66, he calls Christianity a "cursed, inhuman religion," while in that on "What does Christian Theism Teach?" he pronounces it to be "an accursed creed." (P. 56.) In his discussion with Matthias, p. 179; he adopts the language of Shelley, and denounces Christianity as a "bloody faith." Again, he says:—"Christianity is a system which teaches submission to injury; courting wrong, and volunteering yourself for oppression." (Cooper Discussion, p. 42.) Recently, he has said:—"Christianity has been a corroding, an eating cancer, to empoison the whole life-blood of the world; the enemy of all progress; the foe of all science. What is Christianity? I give it to you now in a word—it is blasphemy against humanity, the mockery of humanity; it has crushed our efforts, has ruined our lives, has poisoned our hearts, and has cursed our hopes." (*National Reformer*, Aug. 15, 1875, p. 108.)

Such is the horrible testimony of Charles Bradlaugh, whose moderation has become so noticeable since he entered Parliament! I ask, in all the interests of truth and right, Is this blasphemer a fit and proper person to represent Northampton or any other constituency? It is no answer to affirm that "They are the proper judges in the matter, and that if the constituency of Northampton is satisfied, there is nothing either to be said or done."

The character and work of our Lord Jesus Christ is thus spoken of by Mr. Bradlaugh:—"The plan of salvation by an atoning sacrifice is repulsive in its details;" "immoral in its tendency;" "His mission was a sham;" in His agony he proved Himself "a coward craven;" when on the cross His language was that "of an enthusiast who had been himself deluded, or of a knave who had deluded others." "Was this the language ('My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?') of a God, or of an enthusiast who, in the agony of death, breaks down in despair?" "Your atonement is a sham. Your atonement is a deception. Your atonement is but a foul leprosy upon human intellect—a plague-spot of priest-craft—and I impeach it." (Discussion with Barker, as above, pp. 149, 155, 162, 172.)

Such is the public testimony of Charles Bradlaugh, whom the electors of Northampton send to represent them in the Empire's House of Law. Does Mr. Bradlaugh imagine that such horrible language as this is going to pass unchallenged? I promise him a censorship which he shall know exists. Only in June last at Leeds Mr. Bradlaugh, speaking of a letter written by the Hon. W. Fitzwilliam, M.P., said that as a professed Liberal it stamped him as "a traitor and a coward." Who is Mr. Bradlaugh that

his shameless tongue should be permitted to calumniate men who dare to take their stand against his lawless blasphemies?

The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are thus spoken of by this blasphemer. Remember, reader, I quote his own words:—"I say, that if Jesus lived to day, neither his doctrine nor his life would be the doctrine or the life of a great reformer." (Barker, as above, p. 152.) In his discussion with the Rev. T. D. Matthias, at Halifax, he gave utterance to the following sentiments:—"I have further to say that the doctrine Jesus taught is not the doctrine of a good man at all;" "never was a doctrine more calculated to degrade mankind than this (the Sermon on the Mount), which I place before you in all its monstrosity." (Pp. 82-98.) In the same discussion he argues that Christ was a persecutor, a teacher of immorality, and an ignorant man. (Pp. 62-85, 124-125, 134-140.) Again, he says:—"If he wants to tell me that Christ has given us a moral system without reproach, I will reply that under no system of morality which can pretend to be without blemish, is so much vice permitted." (Cooper Discussion, p. 42.) Finding fault with Mr. Greg's conception of the teaching of Jesus, he says:—"On the contrary, his (Christ's) philosophy is incoherent, his morality often imperfect, his conception of human duty often unsound, his ideas as to the scope and range of the human understanding utterly erroneous. The asceticism sometimes inculcated by Jesus was misleading, his injunction to submit to wrong, absolutely immoral." (*National Reformer*, July 31st, 1870.)

Such are the horrible and blasphemous utterances of Charles Bradlaugh; and yet, because the electors of Northampton have returned him, he supposes that he is forthwith to be whitewashed and accepted as a legislator.

Hear, again, what Mr. Bradlaugh says of the Bible. Notice, these are his own words:—"The whole of the book (the Bible) is a reflex of the wanderings, a mythological representation, the outgrowth of an ignorant and barbarous age;" "If you take the Bible as a guide, immorality must necessarily result:" "Immoral book, I denounce it." (Barker Discussion, pp. 28, 45, 64.) In the *National Reformer* of February 20th, 1876, p. 123, he is represented as saying:—"So long as the Established Church exists to teach the people the divinity of the Bible, and School Boards pollute children's minds with the same book, we must attack it wherever and whenever we can, till we have rooted out and destroyed the upas-tree of superstition." With reference to this extract, Mr. Bradlaugh says, in the *National Reformer* of March 12th, 1876, p. 169:—"We have had several letters from Northampton as to the report of our speech on the Bible, quoted by Mr. Peek at the School Board. We have been told that, unless we modify or explain our statement, we shall lose many votes. To those whose political vote depends upon a theological statement,



we have nothing to modify, nothing to explain. To others—who desire to know our real view on the matter—we answer that no such sweeping statement could justly be made [quite true] regarding a book containing so many varying moralities as does the Bible; some of it is good and useful, some of it bad and harmful, reflecting, as it does, the changing civilizations among which it was written. We emphatically hold that the Bible ought not to be a school book, and that there are parts of it which must have a terribly polluting influence on the minds of young children taught to regard it as a message from an infallible Deity."

Such are the views of this "fit and proper person" who has been sent by the electors of Northampton, and who profess themselves to be indignant concerning what they have dared to call "the infringement of their constitutional rights."

Hear, again, what Mr Bradlaugh teaches concerning social questions. He has in two cases reprinted, and in either case strongly commended, three books, whose titles I give, "Elements of Social Science," the "Fruits of Philosophy," and a recently republished pamphlet entitled, "Jesus, Shelley, and Malthus." At page 10 Mr. Bradlaugh says, "This work I specially recommend. From its price the book is within the reach of most working men, and it is from the pen of a man who is thoroughly versed in the subject he deals with."

This horrible book, the "Elements of Social Science," undermines the family bond, and is so disgusting that the author was ashamed to put his name to it. The leading principles of this book may be thus summarised: First, An exaltation of the animal and sensual in man over the spiritual and mental. Second, A condemnation of marriage in the strongest terms. Third, Apologising for the birth of illegitimate offspring. Fourth, Condoning with prostitution. Fifth, Excusing the evils and diseases resulting from licentiousness. This is putting the matter in the mildest form possible. The filthy author says, on p. 355:—"Marriage is one of the chief instruments in the degradation of women." On page 366 he teaches:—"Whether children have been born in marriage or not, is a matter of comparatively very little importance." On page 270 he declares that "prostitution should be regarded as a valuable temporary substitute for a better state of things," and adds:—"Therefore the deep gratitude of mankind, instead of scorn, is due, and will be given in future times, to those unfortunate females who have suffered in the cause of our sexual nature."

In course of his discussion with David King, Mr. Bradlaugh endeavoured to enlist the late Lord Amberley on his side in defence of this book. He said:—"I myself heard Lord Amberley say that this book—the 'Elements of Social Science'—is the best book that has been written on the subject, and ought to be in the hands of every working man; he said that in my hearing, and in

the presence of seventy or eighty of the most respectable physicians in the City of London.” (King Discussion, sixth night, p. 33.) Mr. King wrote to this nobleman to know if Mr. Bradlaugh’s words were true, and received a reply in the negative, which, when read to the meeting, was greeted with loud and prolonged cheers. The letter is as follows:—

“With the book you mention, the ‘Elements of Social Science,’ I am indeed acquainted, but I regard it with the strongest disapproval. The author’s ideal of society appears to be a state of unlimited license, happiness being obtained by the indulgence of degrading passions. I contemplate such teaching with the utmost aversion, and I consider the wide circulation of the work which contains it the more to be regretted because its pretensions to medical authority (to which I am convinced it has but little claim) may easily mislead unwary or uninstructed readers.

“Should any one attribute to me in your presence any sort of agreement with this pernicious work, I authorise you to contradict the statement in the most emphatic manner.”

Mr. Bradlaugh, still persisting in his statements (pp. 39-40), Mr. King again wrote to Lord Amberley, and received the following answer:—

“Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 3rd instant, I have to say that the speech alluded to by Mr. Bradlaugh was made at the Dialectical Society on July 1st, 1868. . . . With reference to Mr. Bradlaugh’s alleged quotation, I may observe that I do not believe I made any reference to the ‘Elements of Social Science,’ and most certainly not in the terms stated by Mr. Bradlaugh. I am not at all surprised to learn that he ‘cannot give’ the number of the *British Medical Journal*, since the report referred to by him contains not the most distant allusion to the work in question. This will be sufficient to show you with what extreme caution Mr. Bradlaugh’s assertions must be received. In conclusion, my present estimate of this book is not the result of a change of mind since 1868.—Yours faithfully,

“AMBERLEY.”

What, then, are we to think of Mr. Bradlaugh in this matter? Simply that he endeavoured to attribute his own words to Lord Amberley. Having admitted that Mr. Laurie, Lord Amberley’s tutor, read a paper (p. 39), it was deemed wise to write to him on the subject. That gentleman (Mr. Laurie) wrote to Lord Amberley thus:—

“I am convinced you said nothing about the book called ‘Elements of Social Science.’ But the opinion quoted by Mr. Bradlaugh, and attributed to you, *was delivered by himself* after your lordship had left the meeting.”

Having settled the question in relation to Lord Amberley, Mr. King wrote to the late John Stuart Mill, to ascertain if he had been fairly represented by the frequent use of his name in connection with this abominable book. That gentleman replied thus:—



"Dear Sir,—I have most certainly never on any occasion whatever, in public or private, expressed any approbation of the book entitled 'Elements of Social Science.' Nor am I likely ever to have done so, inasmuch as I very strongly object to some of the opinions expressed in it. You are therefore quite at liberty to say that I am not correctly represented by any one who asserts that I have commended the book.—Yours very faithfully,  
"J. S. MILL."

Well does Mr. King add :—"Thus this wretched case of falsification of testimony and boldly impudent imposition is completely exposed." My readers would do well to obtain this discussion for themselves, and read carefully the last two nights' proceedings, where the above evidence is given in full, for a more thorough exposure of Mr. Bradlaugh's shallow pretentiousness, unfairness, ignorance, and untruthfulness has never been made.

And you are ready to ask, What about the men who became associated with this unclean blasphemer? Hear the testimony of a gentleman well known in Northampton :—"I can well remember the time when the late Joseph Barker and the present G. J. Holyoake were co-editors with Mr. Bradlaugh of the *National Reformer*. Each of them withdrew in disgust from it on account of Mr. Bradlaugh advocating the 'Elements of Social Science.'" The former (Mr. Barker) wrote a review of this book, in which he says :—"I regard the man who can recommend a book like the miscalled 'Elements of Social Science' to unsuspecting boys and girls, and who can form or patronise associations for the purpose of stealthily spreading its most deadly poison through the community, as a more dangerous man, as a greater criminal, as a deadlier foe to virtue and humanity than the vilest murderer that ever plotted or sinned against mankind. My duty to myself, my duty to my wife and children, my duty to my readers and friends, and my duty to the public, require me—and my own heart prompts me—to separate from such men entirely and for ever, and to wage an unceasing and unsparing war against their principles." *Review*, p. 26.)

And this is written concerning Charles Bradlaugh, with whose character and opinions the electors of Northampton are so little concerned that they count him a "fit and proper person" to represent them in the House of Commons.

Another book commended by Mr. Bradlaugh is by one Richard Harte. It was reviewed by Mr. Bradlaugh in the *National Reformer* of August 28th, 1870. He says :—"With Mr. Harte's view as to what ought to be essential in the inception, duration, and termination of the marriage contract we cordially concur." Learning, then, what the author's views on marriage are, we can easily determine the belief of Mr. Bradlaugh on the subject. On page 26 we read :—"Love is a combination of three sympathies—the moral, the intellectual, and the physical. And since it is impossible to develope these sympathies, or even to be certain

that they actually exist without the experience of intimate association, it is imperative that marriage should be, to a certain extent, a matter of experiment. Not only are human beings exceedingly liable to judge wrongly in matters of love, but, moreover, they are liable to develop in character unequally and in different direction; therefore the dissolution of marriage should be as free and honourable a transaction as its formation." Mark the last two lines of the extract. They mean that two persons may live together for some time as man and wife, to know whether they suit each other; they mean that any person is free to enter into the marriage state to-day, and equally free to dissolve the contract to-morrow. On page 66 we have free love [? lust] coming into vogue. It says:—"Finally, there can be little doubt that much of that *à priori* contempt and hatred for free love which has hitherto been a fruitful source of want of self-respect in the classes deemed disreputable, and consequently of their degradation, is disappearing from the philosophy of our time." On page 67 we have the startling statement:—"And we may conclude that, even if the effect of the changes I have advocated be to cause all women to become little better than prostitutes, that, at all events, they will also have the effect of putting all women into a much better position than wives."

What can this mean, unless it is that now the position of the wife is worse than the position of the prostitute? Husbands of England! what do you think of this fellow's teaching? Remember that Mr. Bradlaugh endorses it, for he has said:—"With Mr. Harte's view as to what ought to be essential in the inception, duration, and termination of the marriage contract, we cordially concur." Before I give Mr. Bradlaugh's own words on the subject, one more quotation from Harte's book must be recorded. It is relating to seduction. On page 84 the words are:—"The evil effect of seduction lies in the treatment that society accords to the seduced woman. Were she no longer consigned to misery and degradation, there would be little or no evil effect produced by yielding to the promptings of love . . . Where there is no punishment, there is no crime; neither seducer nor seduced should be punished for the seduction." This means, of course, if punishment for crime be abolished, crime will be no longer crime; for, as Harte says, "Where there is no punishment, there is no crime."

Here, then, are two of Mr. Bradlaugh's admired authors recognising seduction as a virtue, Mr. Harte and the author of the "Elements of Social Science," for, as G. J. Holyoake says of this last:—"The medical moral of this book has appeared to some (who are eminently entitled to deference) to be that seduction is a physiological virtue. If this be so, a more dangerous licence to vice has never been suggested." Yet Mr. Bradlaugh says of these two books:—"Richard Harte's book. or the

‘Elements,’ are at any rate an improvement on these laws of Christianity [he refers to the Mosaic laws], which are diabolical, inhuman, and damnable, and, therefore, against which I plead.” (King Discussion, sixth night, p. 36.)

Little need be said of the “Fruits of Philosophy,” by Dr. Knoulton. My readers well know that for publishing and circulating this obscene book Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant have been convicted, fined, and sentenced to six months’ imprisonment. The legal technicality which enabled these notorious blasphemers to escape the actual punishment detracts nothing either from their guilt or their desert. Notwithstanding their laboured defence of it before the Lord Chief Justice and a special jury, I believe there are few decent people but will agree with Alderman Figgins that “it is a pamphlet not published in the interests of science, but issued as a popular production at a low price for general reading, and that it is a production against the public morals, because it is a publication which directly points out, not only how the families of married women may be limited, but how unmarried women may gratify their passion without fear of the natural consequences” (*National Reformer*, April 29th, 1877, p. 263); that it is, to use the words of the indictment, “indecent, lewd, filthy, and obscene, thereby contaminating, vitiating, and corrupting the morals of youth, and bringing people to a state of wickedness, lewdness, debauchery, and immorality.”

Mark the following:—Mr. Bradlaugh, in a debate with Mr. Brown, at Leeds, on “Miracles,” said of Mr. Müller’s Orphanage at Bristol, that the sickness took place “through their having omitted to look to the drain-pipes,” which sickness the “Sanitary Inspector says may be avoided in future if they will pray less and drain their place better.” (*National Reformer*, May 14th, 1876, p. 310.) Mr. Müller’s agent writes about this as follows:—“There was not the shadow of a foundation for Mr. Bradlaugh’s statement that we omitted to look to the drain-pipes: on the contrary, the Inspector regarded the drainage as so perfect that he had nothing to suggest.” What are we to think of such proceedings as these? These illustrations might be greatly increased, but sufficient has been adduced to warrant the assertion that he practically believes in the principles of Voltaire:—“To lie for a friend is the first duty of friendship. Lying is only a vice when it does harm, but a very great virtue when it does good.” (*National Reformer*, June 5th, 1870.)\*

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\* With virtuous indignation Mrs. Besant denounced the withdrawal of the name and date of the *National Reformer* in regard to the passage quoted from Voltaire, as above, and given in the first edition of the “Appeal.” No doubt Mrs. Besant was aware that the error was simply one of date, and not of fact.

A gentleman, deeply interested in this controversy, sends me the missing date, viz., *National Reformer*, June 5th, 1870, p. 355. Mrs. Besant can hardly have been ignorant of this.



Mr. Bradlaugh is called by his friends a great man; well, if to advocate that which is lawless, filthy, blaspheming, immoral, and destitute of any regard for righteousness and truth makes a man great, Charles Bradlaugh is a great man indeed! I should say the greatest, or more properly, the most notorious, this century has seen.

The foregoing extracts are from the pen of a gentleman well known in Northampton, who deserves the thanks of the men of England for the bold and manly exposure that he has given of this lawless blasphemer.

After these testimonies will any man dare to say that Mr. Bradlaugh is persecuted, or that opposition in his case means the infringement of the civil and religious liberty of the subject. Liberty is a relative term, and comprehends a course of conduct which is consistent with individual, social and national welfare. There can be no liberty to do that which is injurious to the interests of others. No householder is at liberty to store petroleum, dynamite or gunpowder in his house. The risk to himself and others forbids. No man is at liberty to keep an immoral house, to publish, sell, or circulate obscene books, to keep a gambling house, or to jeopardize the health of his neighbours. For these and similar acts there is no liberty. The men who do these things are lawless. Judged from this standard, Mr. Bradlaugh's conduct has been lawless in the most offensive and criminal sense.

Northampton must learn that if her electors have no conscience in the return of such a man, the House of Commons, the law, and the country have.

I scatter this broadcast among the men of England, in order that they may know how it comes about that Mr. Bradlaugh meets and merits such unflinching opposition. The question of national righteousness is at stake, and silence at such a juncture becomes criminal, and would mean tacit complicity with lawlessness, iniquity, and profligacy

HENRY VARLEY.

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## WE COME NEXT TO THE BRADLAUGH, FOOTE, AND CO. TRIALS FOR BLASPHEMY.

I proceed to ascertain and to make my readers acquainted with the ground there was for the recent trial, also the relation which Mr. Bradlaugh sustained to the *Freethinker*, and what the character of the atrocious writings allowed to be published and circulated from his office in Stonecutter Street.

I ask attention to the horrible blasphemies which are appended. They are quoted from the *Freethinker*, a periodical which was commenced in May, 1881, and edited by Mr. G. W. Foote, one of Mr. Bradlaugh's prominent supporters at the Hall of Science, and who has recently served a term of twelve months' imprisonment

for printing and circulating this loathsome and disgusting paper. Mr. Bradlaugh has dared to say that he was not responsible for what appeared in the *Freethinker*, but for nearly eighteen months the *Freethinker* was published at Mr. Bradlaugh's office. Let any one compare the atrocious blasphemies which I have taken from the *Freethinker* for December 18th, 1881, with the quotations from the *National Reformer*, given in pages 5, 6, 7 of this "Appeal," and it will be seen how entirely they correspond. They are alike both in matter and spirit, and might have been uttered by the same voice, or written by the same hand.

I ask your forbearance whilst I reproduce some of the horrible statements. I loathe the whole business, but it is no use to shut our eyes to the facts. In the interests of righteousness and truth, I respectfully ask you to hear how the leaders of this school of blasphemy and atheism write and speak in 1881.

The following quotation, from the pen of Mr. G. W. Foote, appears in the *Freethinker* for December 18th, 1881:—

"Next to the brutality of God, and the barbarity of his chosen people, the most shocking circumstance in connection with the Bible is the degradation and depravity of its women. Scarcely any of the gentler sex whose shadows flit through the Biblical panorama possess the virtues that should adorn them. They are either concubines, like Hagar, artful dodgers, like Rebecca, harlots and traitors, like Rahab, incestuous, like Lot's daughters, or infamously immoral, like Jezebel. Like Potiphar's wife, they are more solicitous of entrapping the unwary virtue of man than of guarding pure and chaste their own. But their conduct is scarcely reprehensible if the profligacy of God is to be piously winked at. For Jehovah, like all the gods of old, was an unmitigated rake. In one case, thirty-two Midianitish maidens were delivered over to his unbridled lust. In another, he scurvily debauched the fair betrothed of a Jewish carpenter. From the gusto with which the Holy Ghost has diversified the dull narratives and insipid twaddling of the Bible with spicily-told indecencies, one may well imagine in how edifying a manner God and his pious saints must spend their time in the heavenly regions, and picture the unctuous debaucheries that while away the tedium of their eternal *Te Deums*. No decent woman, unless possessing the accommodating virtue of a Sarah or a Jezebel, would care to spend eternity in a heaven presided over by a lecherous-minded God, and inhabited by pious rakes.

"Strange it is, despite the infamy with which the Bible brands woman-kind, that the fair sex should be so fondly devoted to the very emblem and instrument of their shame and dishonour. Their attachment to Christianity is an edifying example of self-mortification, prompted, we presume, by Christ's sublimely absurd maxim:—'Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you.' (Luke vi. 28.) That the ladies have set their affections on an unworthy God, and hallow an unholy Book, the following facts, in addition to the foregoing, will abundantly prove:—1. In punishment of Eve's disobedience God inflicts upon her, and all her future daughters, the sorrow—above all physical sorrows—of the pains of parturition. Retribution more fiendish for crime so insignificant could not be imagined. God, further, ordains man as the ruler, not the equal of woman,

and thus sows the seed of the most widespread of all tyrannies—the tyranny of the home, besides laying the foundation of the social and legal inferiority, which, in all Christian lands, man has adjudged to woman.

“The amatory prowess of King David, the man after God’s own heart, is notorious. It would require the poetic fervour of an Ovid to adequately recount the famous exploit which gained for him the hand of Michal, the daughter of King Saul. For our part, we will simply relate the pathetic story in the plain prose of holy writ. The tale runs that Saul, whose lofty mind abhorred ‘filthy lucre,’ desired no dowry for the young damsel (1 Sam. xviii. 25), but simply ‘an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.’ Whereupon David, who was mighty both in love and war, ‘arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king’s son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife’ (v. 27). Will some German princelet take the hint, and bid in like manner for the hand of Princess Beatrice?

“Then, again, the infamous treachery of David in respect to Uriah, and his adultery with Bathsheba, was punished by the righteous judge of heaven—not by the death of the base culprit, but by the death of the child of his sin. But it was at the dread hour of death that the piety of King David re-asserted itself. For is it not written that he surrendered his soul to God, and his body to the embraces of a fair damsel, and thus died ‘safe in the arms of Jesus’ and Venus (1 Kings i.)

“Abraham—the father of the faithful—who was selected from all the world’s inhabitants to be the founder of God’s chosen nation, did only one good deed in his whole life. Abraham was an incorrigible liar. He twice passed his wife off as his sister—not to save her honour, but to save his own skin; and on each occasion God punished not the liar, but the persons who were simple enough to believe him. He turned his own son and the lad’s mother out into the wide world to live or die, with no sustenance except a little dry bread and cold water. He consented to offer up another son as a burnt offering to God. True, he was arrested at the critical moment. But in estimating character, intention is everything. These two occasions show that he was a murderer at heart. Abraham was therefore a liar, a coward, and a murderer.”

G. W. FOOTE.

I charge Mr. Bradlaugh that he allowed, without protest, the foregoing horrible and utterly false statements to go forth. Let it be remembered that this is but a sample of the writings to be found, week by week, in the columns of the *Freethinker*. I charge Mr. Bradlaugh with being an accessory in this disgusting business. I affirm that he knew perfectly well what was being done, and permitted his offices to be used for spreading the filth of the atrocious *Freethinker* amongst thousands of illiterate men and women. I promise Mr. Bradlaugh that he shall not do such things with impunity, nor make a catpaw of another Mr. Foote.

I will not shock my readers with any more of these revolting extracts, but I will ask, Can any working man in England wonder at the strong feeling which exists against Mr. Foote and Mr. Bradlaugh, or be surprised that Sir Vernon Harcourt refused to interfere with, or remit any part of, the sentence passed upon Mr.



Foote? Mr. Justice North deserves the heartiest thanks of the entire community for the exemplary sentence which he passed upon this blaspheming outlaw, and I believe every right-minded man in England, when he knows the facts, will say so too. It is a pity that such men as Dr. Fairbairn and Rev. Guinness Rogers did not make themselves acquainted with the facts before they hastened to the defence of these lawless blasphemers. Their conduct in defending such men on political grounds is simply disgraceful.

These quotations from the *Freethinker* show the fearful lengths to which these blasphemers are prepared to go. They also prove the exceeding value and importance of the existing law in its ability to cope with and punish these social outlaws. Mr. B. W. Newton says of the Christmas (1882) number of this atrocious publication:—"It contains a sheet on which are eighteen pictures or illustrations, loathsome and disgusting, even if designed as caricatures of the lowest and most debased wretch that can be found on earth. But these caricatures are not directed against men, they are avowedly directed against Christ. They are intended to ridicule, degrade, and vilify the King of kings and Lord of lords—even our Lord Jesus Christ—the Saviour. I should not use too strong words were I to say that these caricatures are devilish. Of all the insults that have ever been directed against God, there has never, I believe, been any greater than this; and yet the Government proposes so to alter the laws of England that persons who might edit, or sustain such publications as the *Freethinker* would become eligible for seats in the Legislature."

Mr. Bradlaugh's special pleading at the time of his trial for blasphemy, bamboozled the jury. Let us see whether he can bamboozle the men of England. I am greatly mistaken if he can. They shall know the true character of the *Freethinker*, and Mr. Bradlaugh's connection therewith. They can here read for themselves some of Mr. Foote's atrocious writings, and become competent to judge for themselves as to the justice or otherwise of the sentences of imprisonment passed upon Messrs. Foote and Ramsey. I venture to say that the thought will fasten itself upon many minds that the injustice of the position is that Mr. Bradlaugh was not prosecuted and imprisoned long since. I honestly say that if, as a publisher, I were to lend my office and influence to publish and

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In a displayed advertisement of the *National Reformer* of the last week in June, 1881, the following appears:—"A special feature of No. 3 of the *Freethinker* will be a comic sketch of Jonah and the whale, after the prophet was vomited up. The whale looks the very picture of disgust, while Jonah is radiant with triumph. A bland smile lights up his Hebrew features, and he sings a joyous song, accompanying himself on the banjo—a real side-splitter." That this was with Mr. Bradlaugh's knowledge and consent there can be no doubt.

circulate such a loathsome periodical as the *Freethinker*, I should merit a criminal prosecution, the penalties of a lengthened term of imprisonment, and the detestation of my fellow men.

I am persuaded that when my fellow-countrymen know what Charles Bradlaugh has said and done, they in the vast majority will recognise the justice and right of his rejection by the House of Commons. British working men like fair play, but they are not prepared to stand side by side with Mr. Bradlaugh's coarse and revolting blasphemies. He has made great capital of their sympathy by keeping back from their knowledge the real causes of his rejection. I for one am determined that they shall not be kept in ignorance any longer. Thousands of working men ask the question, "Why is Mr. Bradlaugh opposed, and why is he refused admission to the House of Commons?" I answer, Read this "Appeal," and you will understand how richly he merits the strong opposition of his fellow-men. Mr. Bradlaugh talks about "his rights." Will he dare to assert that he ever had the right to say and to do what these pages prove him to have said and done? He had the power, but he never had the right. This distinction needs to be clearly understood. Mr. Bradlaugh is reaping the harvest of his own corrupt sowing, and if he thinks the men of England are going to endorse his horrible wickedness, he never made a greater mistake in his life.

Of all the contemptible things which have been recently done, the latest was Charles Bradlaugh's subtle special pleading at the time of his recent trial for blasphemy. To shuffle out of the responsibility which belonged to him in sheltering and publishing *The Freethinker*, merely to save his own skin, is so entirely like him, that those who know him will not affect the least surprise. Hear his reasoning, which I summarize: Had he not ceased to publish *The Freethinker*? Had he not removed his office to Fleet Street? Was not the Christmas number of that vile publication, for which Foote was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, published subsequently to the removal to Fleet Street? Very clever, no doubt. Very, very convincing to those who knew no better; but what about publishing, fostering, and circulating *The Freethinker* at the office of *The National Reformer* for seventeen months prior to the removal to Fleet Street, during the whole of which time such vile and blasphemous articles as those I quote at pages 13 and 14 were practically endorsed by Mr. Bradlaugh? "No responsibility." What! This is scandalously false. Common honesty should have led Mr. Charles Bradlaugh to share the punishment with his friend and coadjutor, Mr. Foote. The matter for astonishment is that Lord Chief Justice Coleridge should have ignored this damning fact. It is abominable that these facts should have been ignored, and the cause of justice subverted and overthrown. Why did he not direct the case for the prosecution to be so amended, as to shew Mr. Bradlaugh's connection with

*The Freethinker* in Stonecutter Street? nothing could have been easier. Repeal the blasphemy laws, indeed! What! and play into the hands of Messrs. Foote, Bradlaugh & Co.? Rather let us be profoundly thankful that in these days of disgusting infidelity, law exists which is competent to deal with these unscrupulous men.

## MR. HENRY VARLEY'S LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE AFFIRMATION BILL, APRIL, 1882.

LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

The grave mistake made by the Liberal leaders at the time of the last General Election in endorsing the candidature of Mr. Bradlaugh, has borne its bitter fruit of discord and division. That a man who has spoken, written, and circulated such scandalous and offensive words and such immoral books, should have been elected for Northampton is bad enough, but that the Liberal party should be expected to stand with such a man as Mr. Bradlaugh, simply because he professes himself to be a Liberal, is abominable, and must be resisted and broken through at all costs. Many staunch Liberals have refused to follow the Government in the past, and the unjust cry of "breaking faith with party," and the silly talk concerning the "sacred rights of constituencies," must not hinder them if necessary from again protesting against this unpardonable and disgraceful association. I do not speak as a politician nor as a partisan. Had any other political party endorsed the candidature of Mr. Bradlaugh, I should have spoken out just as strongly. To identify the apostle of Atheism and lawlessness with either political party, means division, confusion, and trouble to all concerned.

It was a great mistake to suppose that the passing of the Affirmation Bill would settle this question. One of the worst features of this Bill was that it appeared in the form of an attempt on the part of the Government to clear Mr. Bradlaugh from the consequences of his scandalous conduct in the past, and sought to make the Legislature an agent to open the lawfully closed doors of the House, in order that the most lawless blasphemer of modern times might enter. To attempt to separate the political elements from the individual and moral features of this case, is both impossible and undesirable.

The law in relation to Affirmation requires of all who make it, the following testimony, "I, A, B, solemnly, truly, and sincerely declare that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors according to law." How could these words be used by Mr. Bradlaugh! In his offensive pamphlet, "The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick," Mr. Bradlaugh says that "one object is to submit reasons for the repeal of the Acts of Settlement and Union as far



as the succession to the throne is concerned after the abdication or demise of the present Sovereign, and to procure the repeal of the only title under which any Member of the House of Brunswick could claim to succeed the present Sovereign on the throne, or to procure a special enactment which shall for the future exclude the Brunswicks." That there may be no mistake, listen to Mr. Bradlaugh's own words: "Do not yet challenge the old and crumbling dynasty to die; you cannot expect it to commit suicide, and your weapons are not strong enough to fight it successfully" (*National Reformer*, Jan. 26, 1868). Speaking of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Mr. Bradlaugh has written: "We trust that the Prince of Wales may get fair play; if he does, most certainly he will never sit on the throne of England" (*National Reformer*, Oct. 30, 1870). In the year 1871, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales accepted the Presidency of "The Asylum for Idiots." Mr. Bradlaugh, in a specially printed leader in the *National Reformer* of April 23, 1871, wrote these grossly insulting words: "We are pleased to see H.R.H. in a station for which the habits of his life and the traditions of his family so thoroughly qualify him."

Now, in the face of these insulting statements, how could the House of Commons become a party to admit Mr. Bradlaugh by the proposed Affirmation Bill? Had that measure been carried, it would have been lawful for him solemnly, truly, and sincerely to affirm at the door of the House that he would bear faithful allegiance to Her Majesty the Queen, when he has distinctly stated that he intends to act in direct opposition to the terms of the Affirmation. The name of God was to disappear and a lie could then have been solemnly affirmed without conscience, hindrance, rebuke, or prevention. Surely this would not have been liberty, but corrupt and shameful license.

In relation to the Oath, it was very properly stated that the House of Commons could not become a party to its profanation. The House of Commons was invited to lend itself to become a party to the profanation of the Affirmation. Recognised as wrong by the Legislature if the Oath was taken by Mr. Bradlaugh in relation to God, could his affirmation be accepted and right if made in relation to Her Majesty the Queen? Given the passing of this Bill, would the legislature quietly stand by and see Mr. Bradlaugh solemnly, truly, and sincerely promise "that he would be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria," in the face of the following words which are found in Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet? He says, "I loathe these small, German, breast-bested wanderers, whose only merit is their loving hatred of one another." How could the House of Commons legislate to this end? Surely legislation had never been more foully prostituted. The Rev. Brewin Grant very forcibly said, "The Affirmation Bill would have been an Act to legalize hypocrisy or moral perjury."

Moreover, the Affirmation Bill had become so hopelessly en-

tangled in the meshes of Mr. Bradlaugh's notoriety, that it was everywhere known as the Bradlaugh Relief Bill ! even Mr. Gladstone's great popularity could not prevent it taking this distinct shape. In the minds of hundreds of thousands this Act was regarded as an insult to the Supreme Lawgiver, and it aroused the conscience of the nation to such an extent that the present Government, taking sides with Mr. Bradlaugh, was defeated. There should have been real ground for this legislation. A strong case could not be made out, not even by Mr. Gladstone, and the measure was most wisely rejected. It is desirable that the facts in regard to the existing law should be carefully considered. The law which makes the recognition of God, and the expression of dependence upon and accountability to Him, necessary at the door of the nation's house of law is neither unjust or oppressive to the conscience of any man. The Brahmin, the Mohammedan, the follower of Confucius, has no real ground of complaint against the existing law. Even Buddhism, which began as an Atheistic philosophy, has become an idolatry known as the worship of Buddha. Though the thoughts of God amongst these people differ very much, they all recognise accountability to God, and should any of these become English subjects and be returned as parliamentary representatives, the existing law would impose no injustice upon them. The same is true concerning the Jews, the Unitarians, and the Friends ; none of these deny God, and all who, on the ground of conscience toward God, object to take an oath are by law enabled to make "an affirmation." Even in the case of the Secularists, no injustice or oppression exists. These do not deny the existence of God. The platform of the Secularists in this respect is "that the existence of God has not been proved." This was well put some time since by Mr. Holyoake, who, replying to Mr. Bradlaugh's vehement declaration, "that such a being as God does not and cannot exist," quietly and with keen sarcasm congratulated Mr. Bradlaugh upon "his amazing knowledge." It is clear, therefore, that the avowed Atheist is the only being in the world who can charge the existing law with injustice ; and the charge, if brought, has no force in it if Mr. Bradlaugh is accepted as the exponent of Atheism, for his conscience is so elastic that now he will either affirm, take the oath, or let it alone, whichever is permitted or most convenient.

Mr. John Stuart Mill, and more recently, Mr. John Morley, found it practicable and within the range of a good conscience to take the Oath of Allegiance. Why should the Government turn aside from the legitimate business of the country to waste time and strength over this notorious leader of atheistic blasphemy and social lawlessness ?

It is remarked by some that if what they have been pleased to call the "farce of Oath-taking" could be seen at the commencement of the Session, when hundreds of Members hurry and struggle

around the Speaker's chair, the desirability of abolishing the Oath altogether would press itself upon all observers. This, I think, is mere sentiment. It does not follow that an act done hastily, either by or amongst a crowd, is necessarily irreverent. Were that so, a crowd pressing into a church or to a religious service should be decried and condemned. The perfunctory way in which oaths are administered in our Courts of Justice, is no reflection upon the law or act of oath-taking, but it is a great scandal to the Judges and Magistrates who permit the officials in our Courts of Justice thus to trifle with the solemn act of invoking the witness and aid of the living God in regard to the testimony about to be given.

Another argument used is this. It is said that there are other members of the House of Commons who are as atheistical as is Mr. Bradlaugh; and if he is prevented taking the Oath or Affirmation, so also they should be. Though this were true, such reasoning is fallacious; the law can only deal with transgressors who are found out, or with such as criminate themselves. Its power to operate, detect, and punish is in the sphere of discovered action. Thousands of dishonest men escape the law because their actions remain unknown and undetected.

Though this be true, we do not declaim against the law, or insist upon its repeal, because many undiscovered and unavowed criminals escape its detection and punishment. In the case of the junior Member for Northampton, he has discovered himself, his character and intentions, to the law, and unless the law identified with our Parliamentary Constitution be openly violated or ignored, it will never be competent for Mr. Bradlaugh to take either the Oath or make an Affirmation in the House of Commons, except upon the ground of his repentance, and the complete withdrawal of his blasphemous and disloyal utterances.

Mr. Bradlaugh ignores the Lawgiver. The Constitution and Legislature of the United Kingdom, in harmony with the law, reverently recognises the Lawgiver. Mr. Bradlaugh says that an Oath is to him "a meaningless form." Certainly, upon his own showing, an Affirmation would be. Now, either the law must be set aside to meet this condition, or Mr. Bradlaugh must. He is disqualified for taking the Oath or making the Affirmation, and the disqualification, be it remembered, is his own act.

It is desirable carefully to notice that it is in the nature of an Oath absolutely essential to recognise three parties—*e.g.*, as between SUBJECT, SOVEREIGN, and GOD; or as between MAN AND MAN, AND GOD. To attempt to shut out the greatest of the three members nullifies the Oath. To comprehend or take the Oath as between subject and sovereign only, or man and man only, without any reference to, or, as in this case, on the ground of an absolute denial of God's existence, destroys the Oath by ignoring the Chief Factor in the Oath—the High Court of Appeal which gives an Oath its solemn character. This is equally true



in regard to the nature and constitution of an affirmation. No man, according to the existing law, can claim to affirm on the ground of his disbelief in the existence of God, or his responsibility to Him. There is no law upon the English Statute Book which sanctions this, and though it has been permitted by magistrates and others, such permission involved in every case a violation of existing law. All the measures which have been enacted in regard to affirmation have been on the ground of "a tender conscience toward God." In no single instance has the voice of the legislature been heard giving the atheist, or the man who denies personal responsibility to God, the right to take the oath or to make an affirmation. In the nature of the case this could not be. Such legislation would be in direct opposition to the fundamental principle which underlies English law, viz., that every man is responsible to God.

To repeal the law in relation to an act which involves recognition of accountability to Almighty God, is in any case a tremendous responsibility to assume. To do this in the case of this blasphemer would be nothing less than a governmental insult to the King of kings. It is one thing for a man, as an individual in the state or nation, to be an Atheist; it is quite another for the Government of that nation to legislate so that the denial of responsibility to God becomes an individual legal right, and a part and parcel of the country's law. This coquetting with Atheism and lawlessness on the ground of political freedom and liberty has done, and is doing, incalculable mischief. Persisted in, it can only eventuate in the break-up of the party whose policy is contrary to the traditions of sound Liberalism.

To make this question a political one only is in the highest degree unwise and impolitic. Any Government insisting upon legislation in order to secure Mr. Bradlaugh's admission to the House of Commons, will surely cut off at a stroke thousands of staunch and friendly adherents. Large numbers of sincere Liberals are Christians first and politicians afterwards. They have no intention to ignore or deny the authority of the living God, nor will they take sides with falsehood, blasphemy, and Atheism. Moreover, they cannot fail to see that such legislation is undertaken to facilitate the admission into the House of a man who has used the most horrible and blasphemous language concerning the Holy Son of God. Mr. Bradlaugh has trampled under foot the most sacred themes of the Christian faith. If any other man should use such shocking and offensive language, and pursue, as Mr. Bradlaugh has done, a course which should outrage the moral sense of the nation, the House of Commons would have a perfect right to fall back upon its own prerogative, and exclude him from its assembly.

Mr. Bright, speaking in favour of the abolition of oaths, says: "Probably there is nothing in the New Testament more especially

condemned and forbidden than oaths." But surely it should be borne in mind that our Lord's words were directed against taking in vain the Holy Name of God in ordinary conversation, which was common in His day, and alas! equally so in ours. Moreover, He was speaking to His disciples. If all men were subject to His government, His law might be applied to all. But such is not the case. Mr. Bright argues as though all men were loyal to truth. The law exists to deter the lawless. Penal law is excellent both for the righteous and lawless. There is no element of oppression in just laws to the law-abiding and upright. The reflex action of law is safeguard and protection to the great majority. If all men were loyal to truth, we could dispense with Oath or Affirmation, whether in Parliament or in our courts of justice. But men are not all truthful. Solemn tests which can be readily improvised, oaths which take cognizance of God, and appeal to His knowledge, become in a high degree important defences against false witness. There are thousands of men whose characters are such that their witness ought not to be accepted except upon oath solemnly taken—taken, let me add, with the distinct understanding that if they perjure themselves they will be visited with exemplary punishment.

This practice is not only warranted by Divine example, but is designed to be a valuable safeguard against deception and false witness. In Hebrews vi. 13-17, we read, "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath." It is said that the oath is not deterrent, but the hesitation, vacillation, and withdrawal of statements repeatedly witnessed in our Courts of Justice prove the contrary. When false witnesses have been confronted with the fact that they were giving evidence on oath, and that they were liable to be committed for perjury, in vast numbers of cases it has proved an invaluable protection against false evidence being given. It is conceded that the law does not deter in every case; but that is true of the law of felony, and, indeed, of every other law. Thousands of thieves escape the action and penalty of the law. What then? Is the law worthless, and shall the cry be for repeal? Surely not. Thousands have been deterred, detected, and punished by the law; and in any case, the law should stand against the transgressor, and on the side of the right. By reason of man's transgression, God added the law. So long as men are transgressors, such is the wise example for human legislators to follow. Wise and good laws are not only a terror to evil-doers, but an essential defence in order to the security and well-being of society.

## THE SUBSTANCE OF MR. HENRY VARLEY'S LAST LETTER TO THE ELECTORS OF NORTHAMPTON, FEBRUARY, 1884.

GENTLEMEN,

It has been my privilege in the past to help you in the important battle which is being fought in your town against infidelity, blasphemy, social corruption, and lawlessness.

Large numbers in your midst properly feel that you are bound to oppose Charles Bradlaugh, the atheistic demagogue, who for years has insulted the people of England by his coarse and blasphemous platform utterances, and by printing and circulating such filthy books as *The Fruits of Philosophy* and *The Elements of Social Science*. His connection with the Press has been as shameless as it has been revolting. Certainly, if the law had not been permitted to be outraged, Charles Bradlaugh would long since have been where his friend Mr. Foote the Editor of the disgusting *Freethinker* is.

Let it be remembered that this is not a question of the rights of the Constituency or party politics. It is no question of opposition to the working man's candidate. Few men are more respected in the House of Commons to-day than Messrs. Broadhurst and Burt, who are well-known representatives of the working classes. The opposition against this notorious blasphemer comes by reason of his atrocious utterances and publications. Mr. Bradlaugh alone is responsible for the strong feeling which exists against him. To yield to such a man a place in the Legislature in order to frame laws for the well-being of society is not only monstrous, but wickedness of the highest order. Mr. Bradlaugh denies responsibility to God. Any man who denies the Supreme Lawgiver, is necessarily unfitted to become a law-maker. It is said, We do not ask whether a tailor, a bootmaker, or a baker is an Atheist before we employ him. Certainly not; but, be it remembered, that boot-making and law-making are two essentially different occupations, which involve immensely different issues. The man who puts bad material into his work we can refuse to employ. Corrupt laws, which have been framed and passed by bad men, are not so easily dealt with or repealed.

Some of the most corrupt corporations on the face of the earth have come into these conditions through allowing men to fill public positions for which their base characters always disqualified them. To speak of his ability, or the expressed will of the constituency as qualifying him for the post of a Legislator is not necessarily true. No doubt the devil is both subtle and clever. Is he fitted to represent Northampton? Lord Justice Lush, writing to me some time before his death, and shortly after Mr. Bradlaugh's contention in the Law Courts, said, "I am astounded, as often as I think of Christian men preferring an open blasphemer and enemy of Christ to a follower of Him, because of his political affinity. If Satan himself had appeared in human form, they would have selected him for the same reason. It is a terrible thought that politics are thus put in the first place, and a sad feature of the times."

I have never argued this question on political grounds or as a political partisan. From the commencement of this important fight I felt certain that a heritage of weakness and division must come from such a flagrant departure from the true basis of sound political Liberalism.

A platform wide enough to take in the devil side by side with the living God, a platform which is to recognise on equal terms light and darkness, truth and error, law and lawlessness, could only be made by practically discarding any recognition of, or responsibility to God. Such a platform could only mean interminable confusion, quarrel, and separation. Truly it has already separated very friends.

Let it be borne in mind that the mere voice of numbers gives no necessary solution to this question. No man can give a satisfactory answer or a conclusive reason why the majority should rule the minority. We have in principle and practice consented to this arrangement, but it remains to be proved whether



it is true and right. I am not affirming which is right; nevertheless, it is true that the order of existing institutions concedes the rule everywhere to the minority—*e.g.*, in every well-ordered family in Northampton either the minority rule or they should do. In every house of business it is not the employes which rule, but the employers. In every school and factory the same truth holds good. In every Government, every army, every regiment, every ship the same truth holds—the minority rule. Even a builder who employs twenty or thirty men to build a house must employ a foreman, or the work will not go on. Every head of department, college, or school, every foreman, forewoman, and pupil-teacher declares a principle of government which is not the rule of the majority.

Of all the mischievous elements in the social state of a country there are none which exceed the blatant demagogueism of such men as Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote and Co., Mr. Bradlaugh's statement that he is fighting for "the rights of the constituency," is simply dust thrown in the eyes of his hearers. Mr. Bradlaugh knows perfectly well that he has himself to thank for the opposition which exists against him.

The *National Reformer*, which Mr. Bradlaugh edits, is still playing the game of deception and "shuffle" which has characterised its policy for so long a period. A short time since it was heralded in bold letters as the champion of *Atheism*, *Republicanism*, and *Malthusianism*; now, in order to facilitate Mr. Bradlaugh's admission to the House of Commons, these headings are removed. This of course has been done to hide the true character of the *National Reformer*. Happily most of us know perfectly well what a chameleon is like.

Mr. Bradlaugh's return, at the last Election, weakened the Liberal party more than the return of ten Conservative Members would have done, and has produced a strong feeling throughout the country against Mr. Gladstone's Government. This is obvious to all thoughtful men. In proof of the feeling which exists against Mr. Bradlaugh and his corrupt doctrines, it needs but to recall the fact that 5,000 petitions, comprehending nearly five millions (5,000,000) of signatures, were presented against the Affirmation Bill and Mr. Bradlaugh's admission to the House of Commons in the last Session of Parliament.

The numbers in favour of the Bill were roundly stated at 1,000 petitions and 1,000,000 signatures. Thus in the proportion of five to one the public voice said, "We are not going to stand side by side with Atheism and Blasphemy, nor with the corrupt Socialism advocated in *The Elements of Social Science* and *The Fruits of Philosophy*. Despite Mr. Bradlaugh, the people know how to distinguish between persecution and righteous opposition.

Notting Hill, London.  
Feb. 14, 1884.

HENRY VARLEY.

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